



AMERICAN STATESMEN.¹

AMERICAN politics have acquired a practical interest for Englishmen. England under monarchical forms has, through blind extensions of the suffrage, induced by the rivalry of factions, slid into democracy without facing the problem of democratic organisation. The framers of the American constitution had to face the problem. The circumstances under which it presented itself to them were different from those under which it presents itself to British statesmen, the people for which they legislated having been made up partly of freehold farmers, partly of slaveowners; and their solution was not a national but a federal constitution, such as was applicable to a group of thirteen states, among which no one was too predominant, while it would be wholly inapplicable to the Three Kingdoms. Still, they faced the problem, and they bequeathed to us a solution. To speak of the American constitution as having been struck off by a single and unique effort of the human mind is of course to betray strange ignorance of the process by which it was evolved. The groundwork was there in the town meeting and the colonial assemblies, while the British constitution furnished a model, always actually, though not avowedly, present to the minds of the political builders. But, if there was not a new creation, there were deliberate revision and adaptation; a definite experiment was made, and the result of that experiment is before us. Not that the American constitution was, as American writers sometimes assumed, the very first

¹ *American Statesmen: a Series of Biographies of Men conspicuous in the Political History of the United States.* Edited by John T. Morse, jun. (Boston, U.S.: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.):—

John Quincy Adams. By John T. Morse, jun.

Alexander Hamilton. By Henry Cabot Lodge.

John C. Calhoun. By Dr. H. von Holst.

Andrew Jackson. By Professor W. G. Sumner.

John Randolph. By Henry Adams.

James Monroe. By Pres. Daniel C. Gilman.

Thomas Jefferson. By John T. Morse, jun.

Daniel Webster. By Henry Cabot Lodge.

Albert Gallatin. By John Austin Stevens.

James Madison. By Sydney Howard Gay.

John Adams. By John T. Morse, jun.

John Marshall. By A. B. Magruder.

Samuel Adams. By James K. Hosmer.

Thomas H. Benton. By Theodore Roosevelt.

Henry Clay. By Hon. Carl Schurz.

Patrick Henry. By Moses Coit Tyler.

framed for a national republic. The first constitution framed for a national republic was the Instrument of Government. If the commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland were now under a Protector, a standing Council of State, and a parliament with a reasonable qualification for the franchise, instead of being governed by faction finding an ephemeral support in popular passion, lawlessness and rowdyism would not be amusing themselves at Cork or Chicago by wrecking the British Parliament, defying the national government, and trampling on the honour of the nation.

American Statesmen, edited by Mr. John T. Morse, jun., comes therefore in good season. It seems to us a very valuable series. It furnishes a history of American politics in the attractive and impressive form of biography. Some of the volumes, being the work of political experts, are full of experience and useful teaching. The editor has managed to form his staff so that, while there is no appearance of concerted uniformity in the treatment of the different lives, there is a general harmony; and it is the general harmony of rational appreciation, judicial criticism, and sound morality.

A marked change has been taking place in the American treatment of national history, both in point of style and in point of substance. What has been called 'the nauseous grandiloquence of the American panegyric historians' is now almost a thing of the past. If any fault is found with the style of these volumes, it will be rather on the score of austerity than of grandiloquence, and we oftener meet with dry humour in them than with florid rhetoric or gushing sentiment. But the Fourth of July fiction is also giving place to historical facts. A rational view of the schism in the Anglo-Saxon race begins to prevail. The biographer of Samuel Adams in this series admits that all was not plain and easy for George the Third and his advisers; he does justice to the royal governors Bernard and Hutchinson, the twin Guy Fawkeses of the Fourth of July; he does justice to the Tories and to the British garrison of Boston. He allows flaws to be seen in what it has been hitherto a point of faith to regard as the flawless character of the patriot. Some of his passages might have exposed him not long ago to rough treatment at the hands of a mob. Perhaps at the hands of a mob they might expose him to rough treatment even now.

Another change, and one specially agreeable to an English reader, is the greatly diminished frequency of the tributes which American writers used to feel it their patriotic duty to pay to the traditional hatred of Great Britain. Occasionally indeed the British palate is still offended in this way. It is the editor himself, we are sorry to say, who, in his *Life of John Quincy Adams*, shows the old feeling most strongly. In speaking of the impressment of British seamen, or seamen supposed to be British, when found on board American

vessels, which he calls 'the impressment of American seamen,' his judicial serenity gives way, and he exclaims that

the bloodiest, most costly, and most disastrous war would have been better than tame endurance of treatment so brutal and unjustifiable that it finds no parallel even in the long and dark list of wrongs which Great Britain has been wont to inflict on all the weaker or the uncivilised peoples with whom she has been brought or has gratuitously forced herself into unwelcome contact.

We will return to the special case hereafter; here we will merely remark that the American commissioners at Ghent were instructed to say nothing of the unparalleled wrong, which accordingly passed without notice in the treaty. But to what stock does Mr. Morse suppose that he belongs? Does he suppose that a single century can have sufficed fundamentally to alter the deeply-ingrained character of the bulldog, so that the Anglo-Saxon in America is entirely free from the propensities which Mr. Morse ascribes to the Anglo-Saxon in Great Britain? If old England is so vile, must not a New Englander have very bad blood in his veins? In no Englishman did the overbearing and domineering tendencies of a conquering race ever show themselves more signally than in Chatham; and who cheered Chatham more lustily than the American colonists? What do we find in this very volume? When General Jackson commits international outrages of the most brutal kind, when he 'marches about in unquestionable Spanish territory, seizing towns and hanging people after his lawless, ignorant, energetic fashion,' what is Mr. Morse's comment?

He [Jackson] had done what he ought not to have done, yet everybody in the country was heartily glad that he had done it. He ought not to have hung Arbuthnot and Ambrister, nor to have seized Pensacola, nor later on to have imprisoned Callava; yet the general efficiency of his procedure fully accorded with the secret disposition of the country.

Apparently it accords equally well with the secret disposition of Mr. Morse. Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, one of the writers in this series, who enjoys a high reputation as a reforming and moral politician, countenances in the interest of the United States principles of aggrandisement upon which no British statesman, we trust, would ever allow himself consciously to act, and which would make it very difficult to have any dealings with the American Republic. Writers in this series have to speak in very strong terms of the conduct of President Polk and his Cabinet towards 'weak' Mexico. We have seen something of General Jackson's conduct, and of that of the nation which applauded him, towards 'weak' Spain; and the behaviour of American frontiersmen to 'uncivilised' Indians has recently furnished the matter for a volume entitled *A Century of Dishonor*. On the other hand, if Mr. Morse turns his eyes towards the north of his own continent, he sees a community of 'a weaker

race' flourishing under the tutelage of the British conqueror as no French colony has ever flourished under the tutelage of France. The leader of the Quebec Liberals avowed the other day, like Voltaire before him, that he rejoiced in the victory of Wolfe over Montcalm.

The history of parties in the United States, with its strange and shifting nomenclature, its Federalists and Anti-Federalists, its Democratic Republicans and National Republicans, its Democrats and Whigs, its Locofocos, Barn-burners, Hunkers, Regency-men, Bucktails, Anti-Masons, Know-nothings, Free-soilers, Liberty-men, Dough-faces, and Copperheads, seems a tangled maze. But the maze is not without a clue. At first there is a struggle between the Federalists who desired the national union with a strong government and the Anti-Federalists who desired State right with an unfettered democracy. This lasted down to the second war with England. Then followed an interval, styled the era of good feeling, in which parties were undefined and the combinations and rivalries were largely personal. After this the slavery and anti-slavery parties appear distinctly formed, and contend against each other with growing animosity till their contest ends in war. The antagonism between the free and the slave States, however, was manifest from the beginning, and was felt more or less in every question that arose; the South, caring nothing for the shipping interest, was for a war with England, which gratified its temper and paid the planters' debts in bullets, while New England was for peace and trade. The tariff controversy, which a British apologist of secession was able to dupe England into taking for the cause of the civil war, arose out of the divergence of interest between manufacturing communities, which demanded protection for their rising industries, and slave-owning communities, which, being unable to manufacture anything for themselves, required perfect freedom of importation. Apart from special questions, the whole structure and spirit of society in the slave-owning South was radically opposed to the structure and spirit of society in the industrial, democratic, and progressive North. The boast of the old royal governor of Virginia who thanked God that in his colony there were no schools or printing presses remained substantially true, though the rule of royal governors had departed; and even in the revolutionary war the pride of the Southern gentlemen had spurned the command of the Northern trader. Garrison called the constitution a compact with death and hell. It was unquestionably a compact with an element morally, socially, and politically alien to the element to which Garrison belonged, and a compact against which the intellect and conscience of New England were certain in the end to rebel. Though there was a junction, there never was a real union, of the slave with the free States. Destiny pronounced sentence of ultimate divorce on the very day of the ill-starred marriage. Could the colonies have parted

from the mother-country in the peaceful course of nature, like ripe fruit dropping from the tree, they would, in all probability, have fallen into the two sections into which, after a century of uneasy wedlock, they were rent, unless slavery had been gently extinguished by the extension to the dependencies of the Emancipationist movement which prevailed in the mother-country. The rupture of 1861 and the struggle which ensued can hardly be called a rebellion or a civil war. It was simply an 'irrepressible conflict.' The irreconcilables parted, and the stronger of the two invaded, and after a desperate and prolonged struggle conquered and annexed, the weaker. Whether conquest will be followed by assimilation; whether a white society and a black-and-white society will ever become one people and alike thoroughly republican, is the secret, and, as a perusal of Judge Tourgee's *Bricks without Straw* will show, the momentous and formidable secret, of the future.

Across the main current of party politics come from time to time accidental and extraneous currents, such as Anti-Masonism and Know-nothingism, the former of which arose from a panic alarm about the power and designs of the Freemasons, while the latter had a more rational origin in the growing influence of the foreign, especially the Irish population. The flame of Anti-Masonry blazed high for a moment and then expired for ever. Of Know-nothingism we are not unlikely to hear again, though perhaps under a different name.

On George the Third and his ministers history has passed a sentence which it is needless to repeat. Bitter have been the consequences of their ignorance, wrongheadedness, and obstinacy to the Anglo-Saxon race in both its branches; for the Republic suffered from the revolutionary bias given it by the rupture as much as the mother-country suffered by the rupture itself. But some excuse for them may be found in the characters with which both in New England and among the slave-owners of the South they had to deal. The ex-Puritan of New England had lost much, not only of the religious enthusiasm of his forefathers, but of their morality, as the diary of John Adams plainly shows. He had retained in full measure their polemical spirit. He had retained something of the wiliness which was mingled with their fanaticism. He had acquired an intense love of litigation, on which subsisted a number of mischief-making lawyers. Constant attendance on town meetings had formed his political intelligence and at the same time bred in him a passion for political controversy. If the town meeting was the most important and characteristic of the political institutions, the taverns, of which the number was great, also played their part.

If you spent the evening in a tavern (says John Adams), you found the house full of people drinking drams of flip, toddy, and carousing and swearing; but especially plotting with the landlord to get him at the next town meeting an election either for selectman or representative.

The revolution itself was born in the room of the Caucus Club, amidst clouds of smoke and deep potations of egg-flip. Wilkes and Liberty had their counterpart on the other side of the Atlantic. Plenty of active spirits were ready for political havoc.

The few (says Adams) who have real honour, temperance, and understanding, who are desirous of getting their bread and paying their debts by their own industry, apply their attention to their own business and leave the affairs of towns and provinces to others. But a young fellow who happens to be by nature indolent and perhaps profligate begins by laying schemes by himself or his friends to live and get money without labour or care.

Such patriots are not easily appeased. Undoubtedly in intelligence as well as in integrity, industry and thrift, the New Englander was a picked Anglo-Saxon, and the elect of destiny for the foundation of republican institutions; but, we repeat, he was not good-tempered or placable, nor was it easy to maintain with him political relations in their own nature equivocal and thorny.

Samuel Adams was a typical New Englander in everything but industry and thrift. He had failed in regular callings and had defaulted, though only through incompetence, as a public taxgatherer before he found his element in politics, and became the contriver and leader of a revolution. No doubt is left in our mind after reading the candid narrative of his biographer that he meant mischief from the beginning. Throughout he did all that was in his power to prevent reconciliation and to bring about revolution and civil war. His aspirations may have been grand, his aim may have been beneficent, he may deserve on these accounts the political canonisation which he has received, but his determination to produce a rupture is the acquittal, so far as he is concerned, of the English ministers. No government can satisfy a man who is bent on its overthrow. As a plotter he was very active, bold, persevering, and adroit, nor does his desire of political change appear to have been mingled with any lower motive. The facts, so far as we can see, warrant no higher praise, and we are not disposed to pervert the truth of history for the purpose of placing a crown on the head of any man who, in whatever circumstances, when a peaceful redress of grievances is open to him, prefers revolution and civil war. The professions of attachment to the mother-country which continued to issue from Samuel Adams's lips and pen when he had certainly made up his mind to prevent a reconciliation require, as his biographer allows, some casuistry for their justification.

It is wonderful (says Mr. Hosmer) if the Puritan conscience did not now and then feel a twinge when Adams, at the very time when he had devoted himself body and soul to breaking the link that bound America to England, was coining for this or that body phrases full of reverence for the King and rejecting the thought of independence.

There was in the patriot's character, to borrow again Mr. Hosmer's words, 'a certain fox-like shrewdness which did not always scrutinise the means over-narrowly while he pushed on to the great end.' The moral twist in the character of the Puritan, in short, had survived his devoutness. Samuel Adams seems to be convicted of having laid a trap for Hutchinson, and of having, in unpleasant contrast to his cousin John, tried to force on the trial of Preston and the soldiers who in self-defence had fired on the Boston mob before popular passion had cooled, with a view to what would have been nothing less than a judicial murder.

This is not the place to discuss at length the schism, which Samuel Adams had the chief hand in bringing about, and which made the two portions of the Anglo-Saxon race foreign nations, or worse than foreign nations, to each other, when they might have shared the great Anglo-Saxon heritage in peace and friendship. That the colonists did not, like the subjects of Spain in the Netherlands, feel themselves sorely oppressed is shown by the mask of loyalty which Samuel Adams and other revolutionists found it necessary to wear. They were in the perfect enjoyment of security for life, property, personal liberty, and freedom of opinion, the last, in New England at least, being assured to them partly through the action of the home Government, which had imposed restrictions upon New England theocracy. Numbers of them remained loyal to the end, and suffered exile in the royal cause, though the royal commanders did everything that could be done by their blunders to estrange support. The country was flourishing, notwithstanding the restrictions on trade, which were the worst grievance, though they were simply the blindness of the age. Parliament had repealed the Stamp-tax; there was no reason to despair of its repealing the Tea-tax; a large party, including by far the most powerful statesman, was on the colonial side. The Tea-tax was paltry in amount. In the meantime colonial commerce received the protection of the Imperial fleet. It had, after the establishment of Independence, to pay blackmail to the Algerines. When Hampden resisted the payment of ship-money—which he did, by the way, in a court of law—he was combating an attempt to found on arbitrary taxation a reactionary government which, as he and his friends believed, would have not only extinguished the civil liberties but quenched the spiritual life of the nation. Nobody can suppose that Grenville aimed at anything worse than to make the colonies contribute to the expense of imperial armaments. The representation of the colonies in the Imperial Parliament was an idea which there is no reason to believe that British statesmen were unwilling to entertain, though the enemies of peace in the colonies were. Mr. Hosmer vindicates Hutchinson, who, though a Royalist, appears to have been not only

well-intentioned, but a colonial patriot in his way, and especially acquits him of blame in the matter of the famous letters, leaving at the same time a dark shade of doubtfulness on the conduct of his opponents. By appointing such a man at such a time the British Government showed that its designs were not malignant, while by allowing its soldiers to be brought to trial and actually branded on the hand for firing on a mob which attacked them with sticks and stones, it proved that it was not disposed to trample on the laws or riot in blood. The testimony of Mr. Hosmer, which is supported by the writer of another of these volumes, to the discipline and forbearance of the British soldiers in Boston, comes opportunely at a moment when unscrupulous faction and malignant ambition are traducing the record of the British army as well as that of British statesmanship and that of the country.

Mr. Hosmer seems to think that the American revolution was necessary in order to arrest the course of political reaction in England. We find difficulty in tracing any such effect, though it is true that the event has been too much viewed in its aspect as the revolt of a dependency, and too little in its aspect as a civil war. One consequence of it certainly has been a French and Catholic Canada. Mr. Hosmer, whose tone is to us most refreshing, would like, if we do not misinterpret him, to see the political union of the race restored by a Pan-Anglo-Saxonic Confederation. We cannot share that dream, but moral reunion, were it not for the Irishry, might come to-morrow. It is something, at all events, to have found an American, and a patriotic American, refusing to glorify the revolutionary intrigue which combined with royal folly to break, in a paltry quarrel, the grand and beneficent unity of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Of the Southern and slave-owning revolutionist the best specimen is Patrick Henry. Not that he actually belonged to that high-spirited, hot-headed, spendthrift, horse-racing, cock-fighting, gambling, duelling, and domineering slaveocracy of Virginia which furnished many of the leading patriots. As a lawyer of humble origin he stood midway between the F.F.V.s (First Families of Virginia) and the 'mean whites.' He had failed in shopkeeping before he took to law. His able and industrious biographer, Professor Coit Tyler, takes pains to rescue him both from the imputation of illiteracy and from that of having kept a tavern. He only, it seems, while preparing for the legal profession, helped his father to tend the bar. But he was the offspring of a community to which the slaveocracy gave its tone; and he was himself, though an occasional declaimer against slavery, through life an owner, and not only an owner, but a buyer and seller, of slaves. He seems, in fact, to have been rather a notably sharp hand at bargaining for human chattels. In that school his notions of liberty were formed. His political education was received, as his biographer tells us, by means of

communings in the tavern porch or on the shady side of the country store, [with] an occasional clergyman, pedagogue, or legislator, small planters and small traders, sportsmen, loafers, slaves and the drivers of slaves, and, more than all, those bucolic Solons of Old Virginia, the good-humoured, illiterate, thriftless Caucasian consumers of tobacco and whisky, who cordially consented that all the hard work of the world should be done by the children of Ham. During all that time in his life, as we now look back upon it (says his biographer), he has for us the aspect of some lawless, unkempt genius, in untoward circumstances, groping in the dark, not without wild joy, towards his unconceivable true vocation; . . . withal borne along, for many days together, by the mysterious undercurrents of his nature into that realm of reverie where the soul feeds on immortal fruit and communes with unseen associates, the body meanwhile being left to the semblance of idleness.

Is not this something like a philosophical description, tintured with poetry, of the loafer? Henry made his first notable appearance in the Virginia Clergy case, as the defender of what his biographer is constrained to brand as barefaced iniquity—iniquity upon which George the Third had put a tyrannical veto. Nor were the appeals to malignant and dishonest passion by which he gained his cause required or justified by professional duty. In the dispute with the British Government, Henry, like Samuel Adams, meant mischief from the beginning; he may even claim to be the first who gave his voice openly for civil war; and in his case, as in that of Samuel Adams, the government stands acquitted by the impossibility of satisfying the Implacable. He showed his implacability in a notable way by fiercely rejecting the conciliatory scheme of John Galloway, who proposed in Congress that the American colonies should be confederated and have a federal parliament of their own, with a governor-general appointed by the Crown; a plan which would have given them all that the most advanced of constitutional patriots pretended to desire. John Galloway was a man of mark. John Adams mentions him among the ‘sensible and learned but cold’ speakers in Congress, while he numbers Henry among the ‘orators;’ and the rejection of Galloway’s scheme² by the vote of a single state was a signal triumph of oratory over cold ‘sense.’ As to Henry’s power as an orator of

² ‘Could the plan have been adopted,’ says Professor Tyler, ‘the disruption of the British Empire would certainly have been averted for that epoch, and, as an act of violence and unkindness, would perhaps have been averted for ever; while the thirteen English colonies would have remained English colonies without ceasing to be free.’ To bar false inferences, it may be as well to remark that between this scheme of Home Rule and the proposal of a statutory parliament for Ireland there are vital points of difference. In the first place, Galloway’s plan would have involved no reconstruction of the polity of Great Britain; in the second place, the Crown in those days would have been a real, not merely a nominal, link; in the third place, the American colonies were three thousand miles off; and in the fourth place, their inhabitants were for the most part attached to the mother-country, and, instead of wishing to ‘break the last link,’ were very anxious to retain the connection. After all, no one can tell how the two Parliaments would have acted together. A call from Great Britain for supplies for a European war would have put a severe strain on their harmony.

firing the Southern heart there can be no doubt ; but gunpowder is easily fired. Some of these gentlemen, moreover, were not unwilling to apply the sponge of revolution to their debts. The 'tremendous speech' in which Henry ejaculates 'Give me liberty or give me death,' we believe, is still read in all American schools. But the good taste of his biographer must have winced in giving us the following account of its delivery by a devotee who was present :—

When he [Henry] said, 'Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?' he stood in the attitude of a condemned galley slave, loaded with fetters, awaiting his doom. His form was bowed; his wrists were crossed; his manacles were almost visible as he stood like an embodiment of helplessness and agony. After a solemn pause, he raised his eyes and chained hands towards heaven, and prayed, in words and tones which thrilled every heart, 'Forbid it, Almighty God!' He then turned towards the timid loyalists of the house, who were quaking with terror at the idea of the consequences of participating in proceedings which would be visited with the penalties of treason by the British Crown; and he slowly bent his form yet nearer to the earth, and said, 'I know not what course others may take,' and he accompanied the words with his hands still crossed, while he seemed to be weighed down with additional chains. The man appeared transformed into an oppressed, heart-broken, and hopeless felon. After remaining in this posture of humiliation long enough to impress the imagination with the condition of the colony under the iron heel of military despotism, he arose proudly, and exclaimed, 'But as for me'—and the words hissed through his clenched teeth, while his body was thrown back, and every muscle and tendon was strained against the fetters which bound him, and, with his countenance distorted by agony and rage, he looked for a moment like Laocöon in a death-struggle with coiling serpents; then the loud, clear, triumphant notes, 'Give me liberty,' electrified the assembly. . . . After a momentary pause, only long enough to permit the echo of the word 'liberty' to cease, he let his left hand fall powerless to his side, and clenched his right hand firmly, as if holding a dagger with the point aimed at his breast. He stood like a Roman senator defying Caesar, while the unconquerable spirit of Cato of Utica flashed from every feature; and he closed the grand appeal with the solemn words, 'or give me death!' which sounded with the awful cadence of a hero's dirge, fearless of death, and victorious in death; and he suited the action to the word by a blow upon the left breast with the right hand, which seemed to drive the dagger to the patriot's heart.

It is not pleasant to think that such stage-play as this had a material effect in bringing on a bloody revolution and rending asunder the Anglo-Saxon race. When political science or reason in any shape rules the world, the orations of Patrick Henry will be no more read in schools. His sublime ecstasy of aspiration after liberty or death being over, 'Cato' went out to bargain with Scævola or Brutus in the tavern-porch for a slave. One of the Southern States held out as a reward to volunteers in the cause of freedom so many head of cattle and one healthy negro. It is an astonishing instance of the hardening force of habit that these men should have been able to rant against slavery without feeling the sting of the word, that they should have inscribed on their capitol *Sic semper Tyrannis* without suspecting that the greatest of tyrants

were themselves. Brutus, it is true, owned slaves, and in his way he was probably a genuine lover of freedom ; but he did not live in the days of Wilberforce. The triumph of George the Third and Lord North, or even of worse rulers than George the Third and Lord North, would have been preferable to the triumph of the tyrannicides who were destined to found the slave power.

The life of Washington in this series has not yet appeared. But one of the writers truly says that he was the indispensable man without whom, in that war, America could not have won. Not only was Washington indispensable, Howe with his lethargy and Burgoyne with his blunders were equally indispensable ; the wooden Hessians were indispensable ; French aid, as Washington in accents of despair proclaimed, was indispensable ; and French aid would have profited little if there had not been a party in the British Parliament which insisted on peace ; for Rodney would have swept the fleet of France from the sea, and her army could not have maintained itself in America alone. Washington held together, as no other man could, an army which had been reduced to a scarecrow by the ebb of rhetorical enthusiasm and the hollowness of the cause. He quelled the mutiny which ingratitude to the army springing from the same sources had brought on, and which unquelled would have been ruin. Afterwards his ascendancy saved the ill-cemented republic from being torn in pieces by faction and rivalry. He saved her from throwing herself at the feet of revolutionary France, and settled her foreign policy on a footing of wisdom—that is, on a footing thoroughly American. He alone could have borne the strain laid on the government by Jay's treaty. That his figure has been seen through a halo, and that he had more infirmities of temper than we wot of, as Mr. MacMaster, the author of the valuable *History of the American People*, tells us, may be true ; though, at the most trying moments, when he has to contend for himself and his starved and unclad soldiers with jobbery as well as with neglect, his despatches are perfectly calm. To praise him for not having played Napoleon is absurd ; he was not tempted in that way ; but he may be almost called a Heaven-sent man. The rupture having once taken place, it was clearly desirable that the colonies should win their independence, and there should be no protraction or renewal of the fatal struggle. For this result we are indebted to Washington. A writer in this series seems to think that, after all that has been said, there is something in the character of Washington which eludes analysis. Is the mysterious element anything more than the decided strain of a British officer which Washington had contracted from his military associations ? A simpler character, we should say, does not offer itself to the inspection of history.

Franklin's life also is wanting in this series. Like Priestley, he represents political liberalism as connected with scientific progress.

Eripuit calo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis. We remember seeing a statuette of him with that inscription placed at a public dinner immediately in face of the British ambassador. Franklin also represents the antagonism of a highly economical and matter-of-fact philosophy of life to aspirations after imperial grandeur and all the fancies of the past. He does not, as we know, represent either New England orthodoxy or Puritan morality. Through him, if at all, the peculiar spirit of Voltaire found its way into the American Revolution. He was not any more than Voltaire by nature a revolutionist. Of all the men on the scene, he was the best fitted to play the part of a mediator, had he only been put to that use. In the luckless affair of the letters he showed lack of a gentleman's sense of honour, while Wedderburn showed his low-bred ruffianism and the Lords of the Council their insolent folly—all at fearful expense to the race.

Alexander Hamilton, whose *Federalist* has acquired enhanced interest for British politicians since it has been proposed to throw the British constitution into the smelting-pot and bring it out a federation, claims the foremost place among American statesmen. It has been said that the progress of American statesmanship since the divorce from England has reversed the boast of Augustus, who said that he had found Rome of brick and made it of marble. This is a hostile judgment, but it is true that the republic has had no second Hamilton. In truth, the conditions under which he was produced have ceased to exist; for he belongs to the brief period in which, as necessity sternly called for the right man, it was possible to rise to power without being a demagogue. He belonged neither to the ex-Puritan nor to the slave-owning element of the revolution, but alighted upon the scene from a different sphere, being a British subject bred in Jamaica. There is something especially attractive in the character of the man. How he came by his high breeding is rather a mystery; but he certainly was a thorough gentleman. He showed it in the case of André; he showed it in protecting loyalists against the outrages of the patriot mob at the outbreak of the revolution; he showed it when the struggle was over, in opposing himself to the cruel and ignoble vengeance which was poured out by the victors upon the heads of the vanquished, and which went the length of proscribing loyalist women; he showed it in the tragic affair in which he, too early for his country, met his end. In joining the revolutionary standard he seems to have followed fortune which beckoned his youthful ambition to that side: his first leanings were royalist. There is a doubt about the year of his birth, but, on any hypothesis, his precocity must have been extraordinary. He can have been little more than a stripling when, as Washington's aide-de-camp, he was employed in important and delicate missions as well as in writing despatches which, allowing that the substance is

Washington's, show marvellous judgment and maturity of style. As a soldier he distinguished himself, and it seems that, had he pursued that career, he might have risen high. As a member of Washington's staff he would have to take part in a struggle, not only against the enemy, but against anarchy in all departments, and his natural leaning in favour of authority must have been intensified by his experience. The war left behind it as its consequence a political, financial, and moral chaos, which again went far to justify those who had shrunk from revolution.

The distinguishing qualities of those communities [the thirteen colonies], and of the central government as well (says Mr. Lodge), were at that moment faction, jealousy, and discord, infirmity of purpose, feebleness in action, unblushing dishonesty in finance, black ingratitude towards the army, and the rapid acquisition of an ever-growing contempt on the part of the rest of mankind.

It was the genius of Hamilton mainly that out of this confusion brought order, solvency, and something like public morality. By the genius of Hamilton mainly it was determined that the United States, instead of being a loose league of states, with separate sovereignties, should be a nation, though with a federal structure, and should have a strong central government. An unbridled democracy was the object of his profound mistrust. His avowed preference was for the British constitution, nor did he even regard with intense abhorrence the corruption by which in the British Parliament of those days a king's government was sustained. He would himself have been a model minister under a constitutional monarchy and have moved in a court with perfect ease and grace. But he saw that monarchy in the New World and on the morrow of a revolution was unattainable, and he acquiesced in a republic; nor is there anything whatever in his subsequent course to justify the suspicion which Jefferson always entertained or affected to entertain that Hamilton was trying to set up a king. There was no king possible but Washington, of whose loyalty to the republic there could be no doubt. The republic, however, had it been fashioned by Hamilton's hand, would have been as little democratic as possible. He would have had a president and senators holding office, not for a short term, but during life or good behaviour; and he would have had them elected by a class qualified by the possession of a certain amount of real property. He would also have assigned the appointment of all the state governors to the president of the United States, and have given each governor a veto on all state legislation. Very different from this was the model adopted. But Hamilton wasted no time in whining over the rejection of his ideal. He accepted the constitution as it was, and did his best to give it the ply which he desired, by practical interpretation, for which, while the clay was still moist from the potter's hand, there was much room.

The great ability as a jurist, and power of arguing questions of legal principle, which he combined with his legislative and administrative faculties, here served him and the republic in good stead. Various causes have since contributed to the triumph of nationality over State right. It has been promoted by railways and telegraphs, by the extension of commercial enterprises and connections, as well as by the action of political parties embracing the whole Union, and by the patriotic devotion to a common country which was evoked by the struggle against secession. Still, Alexander Hamilton is with justice regarded as the founder of the American nation. Nationality, with order and strong government, was his guiding idea. In his reorganisation of the finances, his restoration of the national credit, and his exposition of his financial measures, he showed transcendent ability and a wonderful insight into true principles; and his policy in this department was virtually connected with his general design of insuring the unity and raising the character of the nation. If he was not free from protectionist tendencies, it must be remembered that the world was protectionist in those days: the light of Adam Smith had but just dawned, and had scarcely illuminated the minds of any statesman except those of Shelburne and the younger Pitt. When he decided in favour of moderate protection, neither he nor any one else had been taught by experience how hard it is to preserve moderation in protection, and how the infant industry when it has been fostered into manhood, instead of gratefully recognising the favour which it has enjoyed, and readily resigning the privilege which is no longer needed, takes you by the throat with its strong political grasp and extorts a continuance or perhaps an increased measure of protection for the future. Hamilton completed his services by sustaining, perhaps more than sustaining, Washington in the sound foreign policy which was embodied in the proclamation of neutrality, and in facing at the President's side the storm of Gallomania which was raised by the Jay treaty.

Tossed on stormy waters and assailed by bitter enemies, with Jefferson at their head, infamously attacked not only in his public character but in his personal honour, Hamilton more than once went astray. He went astray in instigating Jay to resort to a constitutional *coup d'état* for the purpose of averting a party defeat in New York; in writing articles for the press against a colleague in the cabinet, though the colleague was treacherous and had really begun the game; and in penning his pamphlet against John Adams, though the pamphlet would never have seen the light had it not been stolen and published by Aaron Burr. But there are few more spotless records, as there certainly have been few careers more beneficent, than that of Alexander Hamilton. His biographer is probably right in holding that even his death, in a miserable duel with a scoundrel, was a sacrifice to public duty, since he felt that

refusal to obey what was the code of honour in those days would have impaired his influence and his usefulness.

The work of Hamilton's genius, a nation with a strong government, would have been in great danger of sharing the fall of the Federal party, had not the chief justiceship of the Supreme Court, and with it the interpretation of the constitution, remained in the supremely able hands of the federalist, John Marshall—the 'revolutionary and patriarchal' John Marshall, his biographer calls him; and the combination of epithets is curiously characteristic of a country the highest antiquity of which goes no further back than the Revolution of 1775-83. Whatever is either exalting or moderating in the influence of a great national history America lost by her rupture with the past. Marshall preserved and extended Hamilton's work by developing through his decisions the 'implied powers' of the constitution. His biographer admits that in many of the causes before him, that of the constitutionality of the United States Bank, for instance, he might have given opposite decisions had he been so minded, and that as matter of pure law these opposite decisions would have been just as good as those which he did give. Naturally the Jeffersonians decried as loudly as the Hamiltonians applauded him. On the great issues the Supreme Court, as we have said before, leans to the principles of the party by which the judges were appointed. Under Marshall it leaned in its decisions to federalism, under Taney to slavery. Without political motives it could hardly have decided that the Legal Tender Currency Act, which forced a creditor to receive payment in paper so depreciated that he lost fifty per cent. of the debt, was not a breach of the article of the constitution forbidding any legislation which would impair the faith of contracts. Our own Privy Council, though not influenced by party, has been influenced by political considerations. In its ecclesiastical judgments it has leaned visibly to the side of comprehension; in its judgments on questions between the central government and the provinces of Canada it has leant to the side of provincial right, desiring no doubt that the provinces should have reason to remain satisfied with confederation. A Supreme Court, constituted so as to command as far as possible the confidence of all the parties to a confederation, is the indispensable keystone of the federal arch. Of this the authors of that strange legislative improvisation, the Irish Government Bill, appear to have had an inkling; but the best they could do was to assign the power of deciding constitutional questions between Great Britain and Ireland to the British Privy Council—that is, to one of the parties in the suit. The American Supreme Court represents, and, with the inevitable qualification which has been mentioned, impartially represents, the entire confederation.

Thomas Jefferson, as his biographer tells us, was rather on the edge of Virginian slaveocracy than within the charmed circle. He

was, however, opulent, and by the time when he went forth as the chief apostle of human liberty and equality had by his thrift increased the number of his slaves from thirty to fifty. Cultivated and scholarly, he was able to frame the plan for a university, and, unlike the common demagogue, to offer up knowledge and intelligence, as well as conscience and self-respect, on the altar of the democratic idol. To Alexander Hamilton's Ormuzd, Jefferson played Ahriman. Democracy in its loosest and most unbridled form was his religion, at all events till he held power. 'Monocracy,' perhaps the secret ideal of his great rival, was the object of his fanatical hatred and ever-haunting suspicion. In theory he was an anarchist, and his utterances on this subject severely try the patience of a biographer who would fain be sympathetic. He was fond of saying that we could not find angels to govern, but he assumed that we could find angels to be governed or to govern themselves. If he had to choose between a government without a press and a press without a government, he said that he should at once choose the latter. In New York, under the reign of Tammany, with Barnard and Cardozo for judges, he might almost have enjoyed the realisation of his ideal. Of three states of society, that of the Indians without any government, that with a democratic government, and that with a government other than democratic, he was not sure that he did not prefer the first. Shays's rebellion, which on other extreme democrats acted as a warning, drew from him the remark that a rebellion now and then was a good thing, and that republican rulers ought not to discourage them too much. 'God forbid,' he ejaculates, 'that we should ever be twenty years without a rebellion! What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.' Again it must be said that George the Third and Lord North are not answerable before the tribunal of history for not having fulfilled such an ideal as an ultra-democratic government with a rebellion once in every twenty years. Whether Jefferson was a French revolutionist from the beginning, or was made one by his sojourn in France, is a question on which his biographers differ. He was certainly a Rousseauist from the beginning in his belief that agriculture was the only moral or healthy pursuit, and that the mechanical arts and commerce were corruptors of society. Rousseauism seems strange in a Virginian slaveowner, but Rousseau himself squinted towards slavery, and in the essentially Rousseauist tale, *Paul and Virginia*, the lovely children of nature are supported by the labour of two old slaves. What is certain is that Jefferson became a French revolutionist of the most genuine breed. It was after the September massacres, of all the Jacobin atrocities perhaps the most hideous, that he wrote that 'the struggle was necessary, though in it many guilty persons fell without the forms

of trial, and with them some innocent.' 'These,' he adds, 'I deplore as much as anybody, and shall deplore some of them to the day of my death. But I deplore them as I should have done had they fallen in battle. It was necessary to use the arm of the people, a machine not so blind as balls and bombs, but blind to a certain degree. . . My own affections have been deeply wounded by some of the martyrs to this cause; but rather than it should have failed I would have seen half the earth desolated; were there but an Adam and Eve left in every country and left free, it would be better than it is now.' We see here in full perfection the Jacobin belief that everybody could be made happy, and not only happy but virtuous, by butchering kings and aristocrats, without the trouble of self-improvement. The admirers of Jefferson must rejoice that the scene of his beneficence was not Paris; had it been, he might have played a part in the September massacres, though the part which he would have played would have been that of a contriver rather than an actor. He somewhat resembled Robespierre in his feline nature, his malignant egotism, and his intense suspiciousness, as well as in his bloody-minded, yet possibly sincere, philanthropy; though, unlike Maximilian, he could ride. In his union of visionary speculation on politics with practical astuteness as a politician and capacity for intrigue, Jefferson reminds us of Sieyès. Whether he was entirely sincere in his religion of anarchy or not, he very distinctly saw the great fact that, beyond the leaders of worth and intelligence with whom he found it not easy to cope, there lay what he and other demagogues are pleased to call the people—that is, the masses; in other words, the people minus its leading intelligence—and that to this force, by playing on popular jealousy of intellect and social grade, he might hopefully appeal. Thus he became the founder and the highly successful leader of the democratic party; not its stump-orator, for he had not the gift of speech, but its oracle, its guide, philosopher, and friend. No man ever understood party management more thoroughly or knew better when to loosen and when to tighten the rein; how to take advantage of passion and at the same time to shun frenzy, and come out wiser and more trusted than ever when the tornado was over. He also saw the value of a suborned press. At Monticello he was a Virginian gentleman and a scholar, always, however, in his letters affecting the Cincinnatus; but before his public he condescended to the extreme of demagogic simplicity. When he was inaugurated as president, instead of riding in state to the capitol, he hitched his horse to the fence, and he received a British envoy dressed in an old coat and pantaloons, with slippers down at the heel. He succeeded thoroughly in making himself a popular idol. 'No personal influence of a civilian,' says his biographer, 'not nourished in any degree by successful war, has ever been so great and so permanent over our people.' In what respect

his influence has been useful we would rather leave it to the biographer to say. A 'humanitarianism' which is ready to butcher all mankind but a single pair in order to carry out a theory seems a questionable substitute even for common Christianity. Jefferson was the champion of religious equality in Virginia, and as president he did a very good thing in purchasing Louisiana, though the act was a breach of the constitution, and had it been done by Hamilton would have drawn from Jefferson shrieks of 'monocracy' and 'consolidation.' In the Kentucky resolutions he proclaimed the fatal doctrine of nullification, and pulled the trigger of civil war. His notions of finance and economy, if they were anything more than factious contradictions of Hamilton's views, were absurd, and in that department he did all the mischief in his power. He behaved as ill to Hamilton as he could and as ill to Washington as he dared. Over the 'Ana' admiring biography can only draw a decent veil.

It is needless to say that the impress of Jefferson's mind remains indelibly stamped on the Declaration of Independence. No other theorist has been so fortunate in having his fancies indelibly carved on public marble. 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that amongst these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organising its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.' So wrote the owner of fifty slaves, whom he never emancipated, or, we believe, showed any practical inclination to emancipate; while, if he framed a project of abolition, it was allowed to drop so easily that it can be regarded as little more than an ostensible tribute to consistency. 'Nothing,' said Calhoun a generation afterwards, 'can be more unfounded and false than the prevalent opinion that all men are born free and equal: it rests upon the assumption of a fact which is contrary to universal observation.' Jefferson, as is well known, had framed a clause denouncing in the most truculent language George the Third as the author of slavery and the slave trade. But this was 'disapproved by some Southern gentlemen.' The issue was a constitution which recognised slavery, under a shuffling alias, perpetuated the slave trade for twenty years, with an indefinite prospect of further extension, and embodied a fugitive slave law. The colonial legislation restricting the importation of slaves, in disallowing which Jefferson accuses the King of prostituting his negative, was, as Jefferson well knew, not moral in its object, but commercial. If it was moral, why was it not renewed when the

colonists were their own masters? We do not wish to press the charge of hypocrisy too far; it is true that emancipation was difficult, but it is also true that there were difficulties in the path of the ministers of George the Third. The preposterous violence and the manifest insincerity of the suppressed clause are enough to create suspicion as to the spirit in which the whole document was framed. In fact, the Declaration of Independence is not more scrupulously truthful than are the general utterances of a statesman for whom his biographers do not venture to claim the credit of strict veracity. In its preamble it enumerates as normal examples of the King's government and justifications of insurrection acts which, however unadvised, were really measures of repression, taken after the insurrection had broken out. No government could allow its officers to be assaulted and their houses sacked, its loyal lieges to be tarred and feathered, or the property of merchants sailing under its flag to be thrown by lawless hands into the sea.

Republican institutions, if they exclude hereditary title, admit family distinction. The Massachusetts house of Adams might with some reason call itself the first political family in the world. It has given, in the direct line, two presidents to the republic; it has produced an ambassador whose task was hardly less important and certainly not less trying than that of any president, and its fertility appears not to be exhausted, though the times are not propitious to its prominence so far as active politics are concerned. John Adams, the founder of the line, was a specimen of the highest type of politician formed by the municipal life of New England, and of all engaged in the revolution, with the possible exception of Washington, the man whose character would say does most to justify or redeem the movement. As 'Novanglus' he is its great apologist, and weak enough from the constitutional point of view his apology is. It is surely idle to contend that under a parliamentary monarchy the connection of a dependency was with the king alone, and not with parliament. Where was the sovereign power? To whom did colonial commerce look for protection? Equally idle does it seem to contend that the King in dealing with the colonies acted in his personal capacity only, not in his political capacity and as the head of a constitutional government. Adams is much more rational when he says that the whole system of colonial government had been left in a very unsettled and equivocal state. Powers had, in fact, been legally retained by the Imperial Government which it was practically wrong and unsafe to exercise. Hence arose the quarrel; and this is precisely the relation which the framers of the Irish Government Bill purpose deliberately to create between the British Parliament and Ireland. At the same time John Adams was not free from the traits of the conspirator. He continued to express attachment to the connection with Great Britain and grief at the

idea of separation at a time when it is certain that he had set his heart on separation, and had formed a settled plan of independence. The disclosure of his real sentiments and designs, through the capture and publication of his secret correspondence, scattered dismay among those whom he had been luring to the brink of civil war by his professions of moderation. That there should have been a necessity for resorting to such acts, we must repeat, proves that there did not exist among the people in general a sense of such oppression as alone, we should say, can warrant any one in enticing a community into revolution and civil war. It tends to show that the catastrophe was not inevitable, but was brought on by the scheming activity of a comparatively small group of violent and ambitious men, combined perhaps with the interest of traders galled by the pestilent restrictions on trade. We also see in Adams's diary the bacchanalian element of the revolution in some force. In the evening at Mr. Mifflin's 'there was an elegant supper and we drank sentiments till eleven o'clock. Lee and Harrison were very high. Lee had dined with Mr. Dickinson and drank Burgundy the whole afternoon.' In such councils it was resolved that, to avenge a paltry blunder committed by a particular British minister, the grand and beneficent unity of the Anglo-Saxon race should be dissolved, perhaps for ever. It would be well if, when civil war impends, patriots could be made to drink water. The man who burns like Camille Desmoulins 'to embrace liberty, though it were on a heap of corpses,' if he is not mad or desperately wicked, is probably drunk. The revolution over, however, John Adams stands in history a strong, upright, and conscientious servant of the State, rugged and gnarled as an old oak, but not less firmly rooted in his patriotism or less steadfast in resisting the adverse gales, from whatever quarter they might blow, whether from that of extreme federalism and fond attachment to England, or from that of extreme democracy and the subserviency of sham sansculottism to France. By his defence of Preston and the soldiers he had given noble proof of his antipathy to mob violence as well as of his humanity. To the yoke of the Caucus his neck was never bowed. Nor, though a republican, was he a demagogue, or even an extreme democrat. He firmly believed, as his biographer truly says, in government by a class duly qualified by intelligence and public virtue: of all aristocracies the most offensive to St. Just, who thought it the height of impiety in any one to pretend to intelligence or virtue, but especially to virtue, in presence of the divine people. In his suggestion for the regulations of the president's household Adams even shows a tendency to surround republican authority with a good deal of state. Hamilton in the present day would be utterly impossible as an American politician. Only one degree less impossible would be John Adams.

John Randolph was a genuine Virginian gentleman, an authentic 'F.F.V.' He combined in the proper measure aristocratic prejudices and arrogance with a democracy which meant hatred of all authority above his own, and he united English tastes to French revolutionary principles. He was no doubt, like others of the same group, well read in English literature, at least of the lighter kind. He had certainly read Fielding, and was thus enabled to get himself into a duel by comparing an alliance between the 'Puritan' Quincy Adams and the 'black-leg' Clay to an alliance of Blifil with Black George. It seems that he once made a will emancipating his slaves, but if ever he dallied with philanthropy, the dalliance was brief. Thus he writes:—

There is a meeting-house in the village built by a respectable denomination. I never was in it, though, like myself, it is mouldering away. The pulpit of that meeting-house was polluted by permitting a black African to preach in it. If I had been there I would have taken the uncircumcised dog by the throat, led him before a magistrate, and committed him to jail. I told the ladies, they, sweet souls, who dressed their beds with the whitest sheets and uncorked for him their best wine, were not far from having negro children.

Randolph had a rare gift of vituperative declamation by which he seems to have kept up a sort of reign of terror. This, combined with his social position, enabled him to do what he pleased and treat the Senate like a hunting kennel. If he ever had anything nearer akin to statesmanship in him, it had been shattered by his passions, which from his childhood had no doubt been uncontrolled. Giving utterance to everything that came into his head and for hours together, he sometimes gave utterance to a home truth.

Albert Gallatin was a Genevan who, dissatisfied with the conservatism of a republic in the politics of which Calvin still made head politically against Rousseau, came 'to drink in independence in the freest country in the universe.' He may be regarded as the first-fruits of the political emigration from Europe which assumed large proportions after 1848, and while, on the one hand, it has given to the republic such citizens as Carl Schurz, has, on the other hand, given birth to the anarchism of Chicago. He brought out here, of course, a hatred of strong government and a special desire to crush 'aristocracy,' the grand bugbear of the extreme democrat, with whom social rather than political equality is usually the chief object of desire. In this way Gallatin found that he had as long a day's work before him in the freest country in the universe as he would have had in Geneva; for in Philadelphia there was social inequality, the offspring of wealth which had been made by speculation and was not always in the worthiest hands. Gallatin went out upon the land, but apparently did not fare much better than other Utopians who have taken the same line. His revolutionary principles involved him rather unfortunately in the Whisky insurrection, which, by the way,

gave birth to boycotting, full blown and clearly defined. But he ultimately became sober, and distinguished himself as a not immoderately factious or tricky leader of the democratic party in Congress, a strict financial economist, and an organiser of the Treasury Department. There being no 'Genevan vote' to command the homage of politicians, Gallatin's foreign origin was sometimes cast in his teeth.

It is to be hoped that Lives of Gouverneur Morris and Fisher Ames are to be included in the series. They would be at least as well worth having as Lives of Randolph and Gallatin.

The volumes which we have noticed chiefly relate to the period of the 'Fathers'; we propose hereafter to notice those volumes which comprise the period of the sons.

GOLDWIN SMITH.

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